

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method for handling a plurality of syringe bodies, comprising:
positioning a plurality of syringe bodies, in a predetermined orientation; and,
interconnecting a belt to each of said plurality of syringe bodies in said predetermined
orientation.
2. A method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising:
10 locating said plurality of syringe bodies in a plurality of holders for at least one
production operation.
3. A method as recited in Claim 2, wherein said belt defines a predetermined spacing
between adjacent ones of said plurality of syringe bodies, and wherein said plurality of holders
are separated by a distance corresponding with said predetermined spacing.
- 15 4. A method as recited in Claim 2, further comprising:
moving said plurality of holders along a predetermined path during said at least one
production operation.
5. An assembly as recited in Claim 4, said belt being of a pliable construction, and
said locating step comprising:
20 successively suspending adjacent ones of said plurality of syringe bodies to dispose said
adjacent ones in aligned positions for receipt by said plurality of holders, wherein said adjacent
ones are successively located in said plurality of holders during said moving step.
6. A method as recited in Claim 4, wherein said plurality of holders are located on a
support member, and wherein said moving step comprises:
25 rotating said support member.

7. A method as recited in Claim 4, wherein a plurality of work locations are located along said predetermined path, and wherein the method further comprises:

disposing said plurality of syringe bodies in series at said plurality of work locations to complete said at least one production operation.

8. A method as recited in Claim 7, wherein for each of said plurality of syringe bodies said disposing step comprises:

first locating the syringe body at a first work location;

second locating the syringe body at a second work location; and,

returning said one the syringe body to the first work location.

9. A method as recited in Claim 2, wherein said at least one production operation comprises at least one of the following:

filling said plurality of syringe bodies with a predetermined fluid;

removing and replacing on caps from each of said plurality of syringe bodies; and

labeling said plurality of syringe bodies to indicate the contents thereof.

10. A method as recited in Claim 2, further comprising:

packaging said plurality of interconnected syringe bodies and in a container prior to said locating step; and,

unpackaging said plurality of syringe bodies from said container prior to said locating step.

11. A method as recited in Claim 10, further comprising:

sterilizing said plurality of interconnected syringe bodies after said packaging step and prior to said unpackaging step.

12. A method as recited in Claim 2, wherein said plurality of holders are disposed to

position adjacent ones of said plurality of syringe bodies in side-by-side relation.

13. A method as recited in Claim 12, further comprising:

separating said plurality of interconnected syringe bodies.

14. An apparatus for handling a plurality of syringe bodies interconnected in series by a belt in a predetermined orientation with a predetermined spacing therebetween, comprising:

a plurality of holders for holding said plurality of syringe bodies, said plurality of holders being separated by a distance corresponding with said predetermined

5 spacing; and,

a driven support member for moving said plurality of holders along a predetermined path.

15. An apparatus as recited in Claim 14, wherein said plurality of holders hold adjacent ones of said plurality of syringe bodies in substantially parallel relation with dispensing and opposing ends thereof extending outwardly relative to said predetermined path.

10 16. An apparatus as recited in Claim 14, further comprising;

at least one work station having a support member disposed to move towards and away from the dispensing ends of said plurality of syringe bodies.

17. An apparatus as recited in Claim 16, said at least one work station being provided for at least one of the following:

15 automated fluid filling of said plurality of syringe bodies; and,

automated removal and replacement of caps on said dispensing ends of the plurality of syringe bodies.

18. An apparatus as recited in Claim 14, further comprising:

20 at least one work station having a support member disposed to move towards and away from an outward facing surface of said belt.

19. A method as recited in Claim 18, said at least one work station being provided for at least one of the following:

automated cutting of said belt between adjacent ones of said plurality of syringe bodies;

and,

automated printing of contents information in relation to each of said plurality of syringe bodies.

20. An apparatus as recited in Claim 14, wherein said driven support member

5 comprises:

a rotatable member having said plurality of holders mounted about the periphery thereof.